

# PEBBLES & SAND

BLOOMINGTON LIFELONG LEARNING NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2018



## VOTING EARLY

Every Monday, classmates in Room 3 sit with multi-colored one subject notebooks and write with guidance on a writing prompt. With upcoming early voting the classroom is discussing voting for representatives to the United States Congress and the issues they care about, what issues affect them, and how to vote in Indiana.

"I pick the best one I like the most," writes Mary S. "I go to the websites to vote and places that have voting issues that I care about. There are rights of freedom. For everyone. That is part of the LGBTQ community and animal welfare. How people are treated because they are different."

Other issues include accessibility. Crystal writes:

"I like more accessibility and want more government aid for healthcare. I care about animal rights. And students."

More issues include government representatives not paying attention to people with developmental disabilities: "When I went to the courthouse, I saw some problems with security and raised it to the people there," writes Tommy C.

Room 3 staff Mary assists Crystal with writing about the issues that affect her. Crystal responds:

"Infrastructure that helps me get around like building more ramps onto buildings. Jobs for disabled workers. I care about wages for people that help me—they deserve more money. Like my staff and my brother. IU students help so it's important that they have good care."

In Indiana, it's quite easy for Stone Belt clients to early vote: you can register online by October 9 at [indianavoters.in.gov](http://indianavoters.in.gov), or if you don't have an Indiana Driver's License or photo ID you can register through a Form called Indiana Voter Registration Application. The application needs to be mailed to one of the attached Indiana Voters Registration offices. For example, in Bloomington, Indiana registration applications need to be mailed to the Monroe County Voter Registration office at 401 W. 7th Street, Suite 100. Bloomington, Indiana 47404. To vote early, even if clients can't make it to a polling place, they can vote through absentee ballot that will be mailed to the address included on the registration application.

# SISTERHOOD OF THE TRAVELING CLERKS.



Sandy G. came to the Monroe County Clerk's office ready to work on Valentine's Day in 2013 and fell in love with her work and found a sister in the process. Nicole Browne, Monroe County Town Clerk for the last year and a half, says to hear Sandy genuinely laugh is a tribute to her personality and professionalism.

At the clerk's office, Browne says, they handle confidential information and Sandy's position is of utmost importance: she shreds confidential information. Sandy takes it so seriously that one time when the power went out in the building, she started shredding documents with a scissor.

"I said to her: 'What are you doing?'" Browne says over the phone, "and Sandy responds 'I'm trying to work!'"

Browne explodes into laughter. This is a testament to the kind of person Sandy is and since that time Browne and Sandy have been sisters.

"We have so many similarities: single, proud working women, and independent," Browne says.

They have a weekly lady's lunch and love to celebrate over food and talk about travel. In fact, just before getting off the phone, Browne was about to get on board to a cruise to Jamaica.

"We talk about traveling a lot when we go to lunch at Red Lobster," Sandy says. She dreams of traveling with Nicole. "So I'm going to the Grand Ol Opry in December." She pulls out a post it note filled with dates, cost, hotel, and location.

"I just want people to get to know her," Browne says. "Sandy has a natural curiosity and that greatly impacts her. She gets to meet judges, and works in the Sheriff's office. What she does with me matters here and I think of her like a sister."

# A NEW STICK BY MICHAEL E.

At the beginning of June 2018, I got my handle that controls my wheelchair. Before the handle I used a knob to operate my wheelchair and my old wheelchairs. With this wheelchair the knobs kept on coming off. I got an opportunity to pick out a new joystick knob that has a set screw in it, so I picked out a handle. The ordering process was slow. I was having problems with another knob staying on. A technician came out to see what was going on. He went back and talked about it. They emailed me some options, then I picked out the T-Handle. (As of printing time, Michael's T-Handle has been falling off and is covered in duct tape. New part due in Oct. 15th. This process takes so much patience)

# SPECIAL OLYMPICS

For many of the clients at Stone Belt Special Olympics Indiana (S.O. Indiana) is an amazing program that gives them the opportunity to develop skills, get physical exercise, and make friends. Founded in 1969, S.O. Indiana is a non-profit organization that works with individuals with intellectual disabilities of all ages. With over 14,000 athletes, 20 Olympic-type sports, and approximately 100,000 volunteers they are serious about helping participants grow and live a healthier, happier life. Their mission is to provide year-round sports training and competition. So, training and competitions happen from January all the way through December. They also have unified sports, where they team up participants with people without disabilities.

Locally there is the Monroe County chapter of S.O. Indiana. They offer 14 sports and have over 200 athletes from the surrounding area. Peggy H., mother of Stone Belt client and Monroe County S.O. athlete Denise H., is very involved with the local chapter. Her daughter Denise participates in both the bowling and corn toss events. Peggy tells us that while the games are very inclusive the participants must take it seriously as well. On top of weekly practices, the athletes must qualify for their events to compete. According to Peggy "the most popular sport is bowling", but she says basketball, flag football, and volleyball have a great turn out as well.

## SPECIAL OLYMPICS cont.'d

Dan M., another Stone Belt client, is prolific in his participation with S.O. Indiana. He participates in flag football, soccer, golf, track and field, basketball, and until recently he bowled. He tells us that what he loves about his participation in S.O. is "making friends, playing, games, and getting exercise."

Some upcoming events for S.O. Indiana are: October 6th the Bocce State Championships in Carmel, October 14th the Unified Rivalry Series flag football tournament at IU Bloomington, December 1st the State Bowling Tournament in Indianapolis, and December 2nd the Unified State Bowling Championship in Indianapolis.

## OFF TO THE RACES

Earlier this week Room 3 had a chance to interview Sheena A's team about her work in the PALS program that Sheena has been participating in. PALS is a program that offers therapeutic horse back riding. This practice can be physically, emotionally, and socially benefiting; along with being loads of fun!

What does PALS do for Sheena?

PALS helps with strengthening Sheena's core and helps her gain more muscle mass. Along with strengthening Sheena core PALS gives Sheena the opportunity to get out and do something she really loves.

Does Sheena like riding?  
Sheena loves horse back riding. She smiles the entire time.

Have you seen any improvement or change in Sheena's attitude or mobility since starting PALS? We have seen great improvement with Sheena's mobility since she has started PALS. In the beginning Sheena required many prompts to sit tall and required a lot of assistance with sitting tall on the horse. Today Sheena can make it 3 to 4 laps around the arena sitting tall on the horse with very little prompting or assistance needed.



## WINNING

I went to Terra Haute with Special Olympics. I did walking and the bean bag throw. I won two gold medals. That was in <sup>BY BETH M.</sup> May, in June I got to go back again and I had a good time. I won more gold medals and a silver medal.



Sheena also has been more active at home since she has began PALS.

When, where, and how long does Sheena ride?

PALS has a stable on the westside of town out past Combs Veterinary Clinic (7644 W. Elwren Road Bloomington, IN 47403). Sheena goes every Thursday at 2 pm. Her session lasts for 45 minutes. The sessions are 8 weeks long. Sheena is close to completing her first round of PALS and is currently signed up for her 2nd round that starts in October.

Horses are probably one of the cutest animals on earth, but who knew they could be healthy for you too! Working with PALS is a fun and enjoyable way to find therapeutic activities. Sheena has grown love her partnership with PALS and tends to find a great deal of happiness and improvement in her time there.

